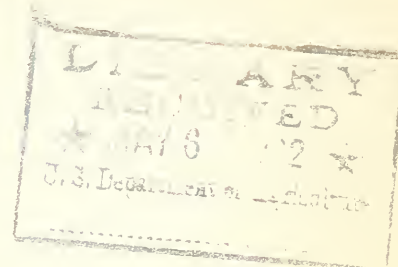


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THE EXTENSION HORTICULTURIST

May 1, 1922



There are approximately 300 working days, exclusive of Sundays and legal holidays, in a year. Deducting from this at least 2 weeks for vacation, how many days can the state horticultural specialist properly spend in the field and how many days in the office?

One year ago the orchard interests of the eastern United States suffered a serious loss from frost damage. At almost the same time this year certain sections were again visited by dangerously low temperatures for five successive nights, April 20 to 24, inclusive. At first it appeared that the loss in certain sections would be fully as great as that of last year. Later reports, however, indicate that the damage has been confined to a rather limited area.

Please advise us as to fruit conditions, as of May 20th, in your section as that we can use the information in the June number of the "Extension Horticulturist."

Office of Horticultural and Pomological Investigations
and States Relations Service Cooperating,
U. S. Department of Agriculture,
Washington, D. C.

Playing Safe in Horticultural Production.

Horticultural conditions as regards the fruit and vegetable industry have now about reached a normal condition for the first time since the world war. While it is true that we are working on a little different basis from that of pre-war conditions yet things seem to have about adjusted themselves upon an even keel. The past two seasons have brought distress to producers on account of excessive deflation in prices of farm products and the resultant low buying power of the farmer's dollar. With the opening of the present season, labor is decidedly more plentiful and while wages are not so low as they were prior to the war, this is to be expected as a result of changed standards. The same is true of the prices of supplies and equipment and it remains to secure an adjustment of the prices paid for the products of the orchard and garden on a parity with the standards established in other lines.

There is great need just at present for the exercise of careful judgment in determining the crops to be planted and the acreage to be devoted to each crop. Throughout the cotton producing territory, especially in those sections where the boll weevil has recently made its appearance, there is a tendency on the part of farmers to rush into the planting of vegetables as a means of relief. This movement is liable to result disastrously for two reasons, first, that these farmers are not prepared to produce high-grade vegetables, and, second that the market will not consume them. Already there have been hundreds of acres of cabbage and similar crops plowed under in Florida and in the Gulf Coast States. Everywhere farmers are preparing to plant an excessive acreage of watermelons and muskmelons. Sweet potatoes are being boomed as a substitute for cotton and unless something transpires to cut short the crop there is a possibility of over-production and disastrously low prices.

If vegetable growers everywhere will pursue a normal course, planting about their usual acreage and giving it especial attention from the standpoint of cultivation, disease and insect control, we have little to fear, but if the opposite course is followed, there is little hope of the producer's dollar regaining its normal purchasing power. Those engaged in fruit growing cannot so control or change their production, therefore, little warning is needed along this line. Just at present the condition of the fruit crop is somewhat doubtful in some sections, due to recent freezes but the same admonition as to proper care with regard to culture also disease and insect control will apply. In other words, what is needed among the horticulturists today is a realization that we are back to normal conditions and that a normal policy must be pursued in order to win.

Annual Report Idaho.

We are in receipt of a very comprehensive and interesting annual report submitted by Prof. E. R. Bennett, Field Horticulturist of the Extension Division of the University of Idaho. Prof. Bennett states that his work is handled under a general project entitled "Horticultural



Demonstrations and Extension Work in Idaho;" that this project is divided into three sub-projects, namely, Potato Improvement, Orchard Management and Home Improvement. Each of the sub-projects have required considerable attention but the greater amount of time has been given to the work on Potato Improvement which includes, first, improved cultural methods, second, potato seed plot demonstrations, third, control of disease and insects, fourth, potato seed certification, and, fifth, construction of potato storage cellars. Under the second division, demonstrations in orchard management, truck gardening and general gardens are included. Nearly all of the work has been done in cooperation with and upon request of the county agents, the only exception to this rule being in one county where work had already been started and where the county agent work was discontinued. In this case, however, a local association of farmers looked after the development of the project.

The time of the field horticulturist asked for by the various counties was more than could be given. For this reason a few counties were selected where the work was most needed and a few days of supervision devoted to the remainder. The relation of the field horticulturist to the extension work in horticulture has been that of leader of all of the work done by the various county agents on the horticultural project, all plans and details of the work were made and executed under the advice and supervision of the field horticulturist. Demonstrations were arranged for by the county agent and county project leader, but the carrying out of the plans was, so far as possible, left to the county agents. In concluding his report, Mr. Bennett states that the demands on the time of the field horticulturist have been much greater than during previous years. Satisfactory results have been secured in all phases of the work undertaken. Cooperation with all agents, particularly with the county agents, has been entirely satisfactory and more work has been accomplished than could have possibly been done by any other arrangement.

In his statistical report, Mr. Bennett states that he spent $203\frac{1}{2}$ days in the field; $130\frac{1}{2}$ days in the office; held 78 meetings; made 657 visits to demonstrations and 113 farm visits, exclusive of demonstrations. Under his direction 1,271 acres of potatoes were inspected for certification and he supervised the building of 7 potato storage cellars.

We are especially interested in that part of Mr. Bennett's report showing the number of days spent in the field and in the office, also the comparison between the number of visits to demonstrations and the farm visits made exclusive of demonstrators. As the horticultural extension work becomes better organized we find less attention being paid by the workers to the answering of individual calls and confining the work more and more to the organized groups under the leadership of the county agent.

It is our belief that in a few cases, state horticultural specialists are spending too much time in the field and not enough time looking after office work and in keeping in touch with other lines of demonstration work. It is also very important that the specialist do considerable reading in order to keep himself fully posted. The actual percentage of time that should be spent in the office varies in different states but as a general average, we are of the opinion that not more than 4 working days out of 6 should be spent in the field. According to Mr. Bennett's report he worked

334 days altogether during the year. In view of the fact that there are about 65 Sundays and legal holidays in the year and that a man should have at least 2 weeks of a vacation, this leaves only 284 days for actual work. If 200 of these are spent in the field and 84 in the office, it should make about a balanced division of the time. However, as stated before this is a matter that must be determined for each individual state. It is interesting to know that Mr. Bennett's time was divided among 26 counties, 6 of these receiving all the way from 7 to 17 days each.

We will be glad to hear from other workers relative to the proportionate amount of time that they are spending in the field and in doing office work.

Annual Report New Mexico.

Prof. Fabian Garcia, part-time Specialist in horticultural work in New Mexico, reports that under this project the following subjects have received special attention: Pruning demonstrations, landscape gardening, demonstrations of planting methods, seed improvement in beans, chile and corn, orchard rejuvenation, orchard cultivation and grape culture. The fact that Prof. Garcia speaks Spanish fluently accounts for his being called upon frequently to address meetings in Spanish-American communities on subjects not strictly along the line of horticultural extension. Pruning demonstrations were made during the months of February, March and April. Demonstrations were conducted last July in the control of grasshoppers by means of poison bran bait. The work along the line of field seed selection was conducted mainly with corn and in the selection of the best pods of chile. Along with these demonstrations lectures were given showing the necessity for selecting and improving the seed. There is great need for this type of work, especially in the Spanish-American communities along the Rio Grande. One of the problems is that of procuring chile seed that is blight resistant, also demonstrations in the proper methods of irrigation and thinning to reduce the loss from blight. Considerable seed of a blight resistant variety known as College No. 9, which was developed at the Experiment Station, has been distributed and the county agents have shown the people the best methods of planting and irrigating in order to control the blight infection. Prof. Garcia further states that orchard tillage and the proper variety for local conditions have been among the chief points under consideration. Emphasis has been placed on the undesirability of trying to rejuvenate old trees, particularly those in orchards that have been neglected for a number of years. Under the work with grapes, particular emphasis was placed on the fact that ordinary American varieties are not adapted to commercial planting in the irrigated valleys of New Mexico.

During the year a total of 88 meetings and demonstrations were held, 21 of these could be classed strictly as demonstrations. In addition, the demonstration features were incorporated in a number of the general meetings. It should be borne in mind that Prof. Garcia devotes only part time to extension work and that he has a very difficult situation to handle in that those engaged in horticultural work are largely of the Spanish-American type and have to be reached by special means.

We should like to have the opinions of horticultural workers generally as to the results obtained in the rejuvenation of old and neglected orchards.

Garden Information by Radio.

Very few inventions have proven so general in their adaptation as that of the radio telephone and it looks as though we would soon be able to catch most anything in the way of information right out of the air. W. B. Nissley, Horticultural Extension Specialist of Pennsylvania, has gone a step in advance in that he has formed connections with the Westinghouse Electric Company located near Pittsburgh and every Thursday evening between 8:00 and 9:00 o'clock if you "listen in" on your radio 'phone you will hear Nissley for about 10 minutes telling the people of the world how to plant and take care of a home vegetable garden. The great sending station of the Westinghouse Company has a range that reaches as far as Hawaii and Nissley's advice on gardens can be picked up by anyone possessing a radio 'phone within the sending limits of this great station. The topics of the talks that he has already prepared, a number of which have been given, are (1) "Planting the Home Vegetable Garden," (2) "Treating the Soil and Fertilizing the Home Vegetable Garden," (3) "The Spring Vegetables," (4) "The Summer Vegetables," (5) "The Fall Vegetables," and (6) "Insects and Diseases Affecting Garden Crops." The majority of the 'phones are owned by town and suburban residents who have a small space for garden purposes and, therefore, the instructions being given in Mr. Nissley's talks are made to fit the needs of that class of gardener. We congratulate Mr. Nissley upon his enterprise.

Fruit Injury by Late Frosts.

Over a considerable area of the eastern part of the country there were five successive heavy freezing nights from April 20 to 24, inclusive. In the lower sections around Washington all fruits, except blackberries and raspberries, were badly injured.

Reports from different states indicate the following conditions:

In western Maryland, the adjoining fruit sections of West Virginia and probably also adjoining sections of Pennsylvania, and down the Cumberland - Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to Winchester, the peach crop is practically ruined as is also the apple crop, except perhaps 25% of the bloom of Rome Beauty and York Imperial. Throughout the valleys of Virginia the injury is from 10% to total loss. From Winchester to Staunton the injury is 70%; in the Roanoke Valley 20% or more; and in the Piedmont section about 10%. East of the Blue Ridge in Virginia the crop seems safe.

In northeastern Maryland, the eastern shore of Maryland, and Delaware and New Jersey, not much injury is reported. In central Kentucky grapes are injured 3% to 40% and strawberries 30%. In the extreme eastern end of Kentucky grapes are killed and strawberries injured 30% to 50%. Tree fruits seem to be all right.

Considerable injury is reported in central Ohio, except to apples. Indiana reports only a little local injury. New York reports no injury. Pennsylvania seems to be uninjured, except as mentioned above.

There has been some injury in Utah and Colorado - amount undetermined - and in California there was considerable injury to apricots, almonds, grapes, and slight injury to walnuts, strawberries, plums, prunes and peaches, in some sections.

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